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that it be given autonomy to solve its problems in cooperation with, but not under the control of, the college.

The cause of knowledge would be advanced by the establishment of schools of research in connection with our great colleges, and by permitting them, as in Germany, to elect their own faculties from among those college teachers whose genius is for discovery rather than for exposition of knowledge.

ALFRED G. MAYER

NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

"OUT of a full heart the mouth speaketh." The hour will come when valiant Dr. E. C. Moore will clearly recognize as blessings in disguise the great obstacles he has overcome in one of the most dastardly and malicious attacks the school system of an American city has yet encountered. Full endorsement of his general views, as expressed in a recent issue of *SCIENCE*,¹ is given freely and from somewhat varied experience of the most convincing character. The questions catalogued in the article cited are such as insistently demand settlement, and it would be a large step forward to realize, in some way, authoritative answers to these queries and to many others of equivalent importance in education, which now can not reach a final bar of judgment, except by tortuous indirection. Perhaps the dignifying of the U. S. Commissioner of Education with title and prestige of a member of the president's cabinet might go far to accomplish this end. And there is, no doubt, greater need and greater reason for such action than for certain similar schemes promulgated for advancing less vital and more selfish interests.

While thus completely in accord with Professor Moore in his advocacy of increasing the powers and responsibilities of the national commissioner, it is difficult to understand how this measure, of itself, can rectify the evils outlined in the aforesaid article, and those especially which have been heretofore the chief obstacles in the pathway of the superintendent of schools of Los Angeles and his coworkers. The poorly devised (*sic*) system in California,

which almost invites conflict of city council and board of education in financial estimates, might be deprecated by a national secretary, but state legislatures are bomb-proof and wholly invulnerable, save by one kind of ammunition, viz., the ballots of the voters. Mr. Moore's own recent victory in Los Angeles illustrates this fact conclusively, and it is difficult to understand how any added power within practicable bounds could have rendered even an official of the president's council more effective in meeting this unseemly attack than was the aroused public opinion at the most critical juncture.

In so far as the strengthening and enlarging of the power and scope of the national department of education may be effective in the unbiased study of many complicated problems and in the wider dissemination of facts and comparisons among the people, no obstacle should be thrown in the way of this proposition. But the fact remains that the machinery by means of which reforms must be introduced will not be changed materially by any such method. Undoubtedly there are serious limitations now to the possibility of desired accomplishment—limitations which the suggested plan might overcome to a great extent. The history of the administration of the Hatch and Morrill funds under the department of agriculture encourages the belief that revolutionary results might be expected to follow the judicious institution of similar bounties with more general application to primary and secondary education. And the reactionary influence of this same agricultural department upon the school systems of rural districts is a telling argument indeed. We certainly have no quarrel with the advocates of a strong department of education at Washington.

What the present writer aims to emphasize here is the paramount importance of more closely relating the general public to the school system. Dr. Moore asks with feeling born of bitter experience (but crowned with fresh laurels of victory won in this very controversy): "Shall the city board of education fix the amount of money required for school purposes each year, or shall the

¹ October 8, 1909, p. 470.

most corrupt and most inefficient of American institutions, the city government, do it?" Probably the querist is not aware of the form in which the question might have been as aptly put some years ago by a worthy predecessor in the same position in the same city of Los Angeles, and with the same feeling born of equivalent experience, but with tables turned. There was a time here when "the most corrupt and most inefficient of American institutions" was the board of education itself. And the present so-called "non-partisan" board, honorable and capable and efficient as it is, must be regarded, *in toto*, as almost unique among the boards of its class in this city. There was a plenty of vicious candidates to run against these men; and there would be many now of self-seeking politicians, if the people had not at last awokened and come into their own.

This, then, is the conclusion of the whole matter. There is no process or method or subterfuge, no manner of means whereby the lifeblood of the common school system may be kept pure and wholesome, save in the healthy growth and expression of public sentiment. No politician can withstand this weapon and no unworthy person can secure the power to harm, if all who love and revere the true spirit of American institutions will simply recognize their own relations to the schools when they cast their votes. With good officers in place, it matters very little what body politic assigns the funds; it will be well done by either one. With bad men in power, it matters not, likewise; for no good can come of it, anyway. As a matter of business wisdom, the authorities most closely in touch with the needs of the school ought to be given the most extensive powers relating thereto. But, with efficient public servants, the best possible arrangement is one which throws the initiative power and responsibility upon the general in direct command. The least possible interference consistent with resources and environment makes for the greatest economy and efficiency in the end. Boards of education, city councils and similar representative bodies should be mainly counsellors and legislators,

and the bestowal of patronage should be beyond their reach.

One peculiar feature of our school system is positively ridiculous when thoughtfully considered. This is the eligibility of the notoriously ignorant to positions demanding knowledge. A man unable to read or write may readily acquire power to decide upon the teaching of reading and writing. Educational qualifications are demanded of teachers, and now of public servants in most positions of the most ordinary importance, outside of educational boards of control. There can be no field where lack of such a requirement is more lamentable than in school supervision.

The vast influence of the National Educational Association in harmonizing and adjusting the diversity arising from varying state and local systems amply justifies the hope that a more concentrated and authoritative department of the government, well supported, as are other more narrow and more clannish interests, might accomplish far more than can be predicted in set terms. And the greatest of its aims should be to collect, arrange and disseminate accurate information regarding all phases of educational problems. The department of agriculture, ably conducted, has not only built up a cult of investigators, but in connection with the training of these, it has revolutionized agricultural education in the whole United States; and these important results to the rural districts are far more already than has been accomplished by all the worthy work of mere educators and their machinery in the same field. Educational experiment stations, sorely needed, have failed for lack of support. Agricultural experiment stations, fostered by a government department, have waxed strong and forced their way to recognition and reputation among the farming communities. We need strong support for like investigations in human culture.

For the crime, disease and ignorance of this generation, history is responsible, all credit for slow and sure amelioration being likewise credited to the account. For what remains after us to clog the veins of humanity, we must

be held more blamable by reason of our better realization of the remedies available.

THEO. B. COMSTOCK

LOS ANGELES, CAL.,
October 15, 1909

INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: In SCIENCE for October 22 Mr. J. D. Hailman has set forth with admirable clearness some of the reasons why scientists should adopt an artificial international language. Your readers will be interested to know that the whole question has recently been thoroughly discussed in a book called "WeltSprache und Wissenschaft," published by Fischer in Jena. This book, which is in itself an interesting sign of the internationality of present-day science, written as it is by five university professors belonging to five different countries: Couturat (France), Jespersen (Denmark), Lorenz (Switzerland), Ostwald (Germany) and Pfaundler (Austria), contains also an account of the most recent development of the international language movement, with which Mr. Hailman does not seem to be familiar and which you will therefore allow me to sum up here.

In October, 1907, an international scientific committee, elected by some 300 societies of various countries and presided over by the famous chemist Ostwald, met in Paris to decide which of the many proposed artificial languages would be best for international communications. After a careful investigation of Esperanto, Neutral, Universal, Novilatin, Langue Bleue and several other systems, the result was unanimously arrived at that none of these languages was quite good enough, but that Esperanto might serve as a basis, provided it were thoroughly modified and improved on certain specially indicated points. A smaller committee was selected to work out the details of this language, which is now before the public in the shape of dictionaries, grammars and readers in eight or nine different languages; the English ones may be had at Brentano's, New York. In spite of the short time this interlanguage (generally called Ido) has existed, it has already gained a great

many adherents among Esperantists as well as among those who had been deterred by many of the forbidding features of that language. Propaganda clubs have sprung up in a great many cities, some old Esperanto periodicals have adopted the new language, and new periodicals have come into existence, while a duly elected academy has charge of the further development of the language.

This may be described as a purified Esperanto, freed from all the arbitrary word-coinages and word-clippings of that language, freed also from its illogical and insufficient rules of word-formation, and last, but not least, from its clumsy alphabet with circumflexes over *c*, *s*, *g* and other letters. (Fancy an international language that can neither be telegraphed, nor printed in every printing office!) From another point of view Ido may be described as a systematic turning to account of everything that is already international in words, derivative endings, etc. Every one can easily master such a language because it is nothing but what has well been termed the "quintessence of European languages." A few lines will enable the reader to compare Esperanto and Ido and to judge for himself with regard to their general character. (In the Esperanto specimen the circumflexed letters have been printed as *ch*, *sh*, etc., according to a practise allowed by Dr. Zamenhof.)

ESPERANTO

Kiam chiuj tiuj, kiuj volas la sukseson de la lingvo internacia, konos chiujn kondiciojn de la problemo, tiam oni konstatos, ke malgrau siaj bonaj ecoj, Esperanto devas ricevi shanghoja, char mankas en ghi multaj radikoj, ne sole por la scienco, la artoj, la profesioj, sed ech por la simplaj bezonoj kaj ideoj de la vivo ordinara.

IDO

Kande omni ti qui volas la suceso di la linguo internaciona, konocos omna kondicioni di l' problemo, lor on konstatos ke malgre sa bona qualesi Esperanto devas ricevar chanji, pro ke mankas en ol multa radiki, ne sole por la cienci, la arti, la profesioni, ma mem por la simpla bezoni ed idei di la vivo ordinara.

OTTO JESPERSEN,
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